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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

EGYPT—HER RELIGION AND HER RELATION TO ISRAEL

This little book¹ is a publication of a series of six lectures delivered by the author at the Collège de France on the Michonis Foundation. Since the translation of Erman's admirable *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* and the publication of Steindorff's lectures on the same subject, besides Wiedemann's book, now accessible also in English, one wonders why it was considered advisable to translate this book into English. It contains no new researches and is a restatement of views long current. The chapters each representing a lecture do not attempt a systematic and exhaustive development of the subject. What one especially misses is a presentation of the development of Egyptian religion as it is discernible in some of the fundamental categories like the emergence of an ethical test, or judgment in the hereafter as a matter of slow development; or again, the gradual growth of solar monotheism. It is due to this lack of coherence in the development that one gains no impression of Amenhotep IV's great religious revolution as the culmination of forces long in operation. At the request of the translator the author has appended a hastily written note to his treatment of this revolution, in which he denies that the movement is monotheistic and seems to consider that the political elements in its origin and character must necessarily exclude monotheism. This opinion is especially extraordinary in view of the fact that the political elements in this movement formed one of the strongest forces leading toward a monotheistic point of view. It is clear that the author has not correlated the religious, political, social, and economic forces operative in that remarkable age. The treatment of this unique movement was evidently written upon the basis of a few random ideas upon the subject.

Naturally many differences of opinion are inevitable in treating a subject so complicated and difficult, but it is surprising to find, in a supposedly modern work, a recognition of "the work of the Poet Pentaour!" Erman showed twenty-five years ago that this alleged "Poet Pentaour" was a *scribe*, who having made a copy of the Kadesh poem on papyrus,

¹ *The Old Egyptian Faith*. By Edouard Naville, professor of Egyptology at the University of Geneva. Translated by Colin Campbell, M.A., D.D. New York: Putnam; London: Williams & Norgate, 1909. 321 pages.

merely signed his name as copyist, but *not as author*. The survival of the old view in spite of Erman's demonstration, illustrates the general character of the material in the book.

This essay² is a serious effort to deal with the historical documents bearing on the relation between Israel and Egypt during the age of the Hebrew monarchies. It is, therefore, concerned with a period later than that treated in Doctor Daniel Völter's book,³ of which a new edition has just appeared. It is in method totally different, also, from the essay of Doctor Völter. In spirit and method it is carefully historical and furnishes a valuable summary of the evidence available and of the conclusions which may be drawn from these materials. The book will stand as an exceedingly useful survey of the question treated.⁴

The reviewer cannot withhold a general criticism on both of these books, namely, that neither such an essay as Doctor Völter's brochure, devoted to the patriarchal stories, nor even an excellent political survey like that of Doctor Alt, really penetrates to the heart of the problem. A careful survey of Palestine from the beginning, based on Egyptian historical documents and the excavations in Palestine is, it seems to the reviewer, the only method for determining the age, the extent, the character, and the effect of Egyptian influence on Hebrew life. The fundamental fact with which none of the modern treatments of this subject has, as yet, reckoned, is that the Hebrews on entering Palestine inherited bodily the Canaanitish civilization already firmly rooted in the soil. That Canaanitish civilization was already at that time saturated through and through, with Egyptian civilization and especially with Egyptian religion and Egyptian industries as the excavations have shown. It was such a civilization as this, then, thoroughly colored by the civilization of Egypt and embodying many Egyptian elements, which the Hebrews found in Palestine and adopted there. That this fact is not at

² *Israel und Aegypten*. Die Politischen Beziehungen der Könige von Israel und Juda zu den Pharaonen nach den Quellen untersucht. Von Lic. Theol. Albrecht Alt, Privatdozent in Greifswald. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1909. 104 pages. M. 3.40.

³ *Aegypten und die Bibel*, Leiden 1909. 4th ed., which the writer has just reviewed in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, April 1910.

⁴ Dr. Alt's reference to the Greek inscription of Psamtik II at Abu Simbel (p. 89 note), as alleged to belong to Psamtik I by W. Max Müller (*Egyptol. Researches*, 22 f. may be supplemented. Müller bases his conclusion on an inscription at Karnak, stated by him to demonstrate a campaign of Psamtik I in Nubia. This Karnak inscription as published by Müller himself (*ibid.*, pl. 12) contains only the name of Psamtik II, and nowhere refers to Psamtik I. Homer certainly must have been nodding.

first evident in the Hebrew literature as inherited by us is due to the further fact that Hebrew literature is of late origin, arising at a time when Palestine was under the political domination of Assyria and Babylonia. But the civilization, which in earliest times stamped such fundamental customs as circumcision on the religions of Palestine, left other though more elusive evidences of its influence there; and there can be no question that these can be discerned in Hebrew literature in far greater measure than has hitherto been recognized.

Incidentally it might be added that, as the excavations have again shown, the fundamental mistake in modern treatments of foreign influences in Palestine is in the conclusion that Babylonian influence entered Palestine at an early date—a conclusion due solely to the presence of cuneiform writing in Palestine in the fifteenth century, B.C.; but cuneiform writing was by no means solely the possession of Babylonia in this age, a fact which has recently been properly emphasized by Doctor Luckenbill (see *Biblical World*, XXXV, 101 ff.). The writer hopes to take up this whole question more fully in a later issue of this journal.

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ISAIAH NEWLY TRANSLATED

The Book of Isaiah deserves the closest and most searching study. In recent years it has been the object of the careful and conscientious investigations of such recognized authorities as Cheyne, Duhm, Marti on the text and commentary, and Gunkel and Gressmann on eschatology and archaeology. These scholars have contributed a great fund of valuable material to the better understanding of this book—material that must be reckoned with by every subsequent worker in this field.

Mr. Box's work¹ is the fruitage of seven years' (1897-1904) teaching in Merchant Taylor's School, London. Its aim, as stated by Dr. Driver who writes for it a prefatory note, is to help English readers in the study of the great collection of the prophecies, which bears the name of Isaiah. The text is wholly in English and where Hebrew or other words are introduced they appear only in transliterated form, and usually in parentheses.

Some of the characteristic features of the book are the following:

1. The author presents the readers with a new translation, or one almost wholly new, based on a carefully renovated text, a text which, according to

¹ *The Book of Isaiah*; Translated from a Text Revised in accordance with the Results of Recent Criticism. By G. H. Box, M.A. New York: Macmillan, 1909. xv + 365 pages. \$2.25.